

2-MINUTE MENTOR TIPS

By Youth Mentoring Connection

<http://youthmentoring.org/>

A series of helpful hints for mentors

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Scenario: What would you do? Situations you may encounter with your mentee

What would you do?

Situation:

Q: What are the guidelines for giving a gift to my mentee?

It is certainly okay to give your mentee a modest gift for the holidays, or for his/her birthday. However, please keep in mind that when you give of yourself (your time, energy and caring) you offer the greatest gift of all.

For material gifting, here are some things to consider:

1. Keep it simple and inexpensive. When your gift is too extravagant you risk being seen as a source for material goods, which changes the nature of the relationship.
2. Gifts that say, "I'm thinking of you" or "I really value this relationship" are the best. Some examples would be a framed photo of you and your mentee at an activity; or something relevant to what you've been discussing together, such as a book on careers, or a sports book, or something simple related to your culture.
3. A good alternative to a material gift would be to take your mentee someplace special.
4. Do not give your mentee a gift that his/her family could not afford.
5. Never give your mentee a gift in the presence of other mentor/mentee pairs. Some students may receive gifts and others might not, which creates problems at school and resentful students. This may also put other mentors in a difficult position.
6. If you are part of a work-site mentoring program your company may decide to give a gift to each of the students participating in the program. That's okay, because it is seen as coming from the organization, and doesn't impinge on your individual relationship. It is still recommended that the gifts be modest.
7. If you know that your mentee has a real need for something you can provide, but doesn't fit into the parameters above, you may want to find a creative way for the mentee to earn it or 'win' it from the program. This challenges you to examine your motives, because you don't get to be the generous 'Santa'. It is the program that is giving the gift and not you. We believe that in the long run this will serve you, your mentee, and her family better.

Again, we want our youth to understand that the purpose of having a mentor is not to receive cool gifts, but to develop a friendship with a caring adult.